



Klamath Network Featured Creature

October 2005

Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*)

FIELD NOTES:

General Description:

The wolverine, the largest terrestrial member of the weasel family (Mustelidae), has a somewhat bear-like appearance. The creature is powerfully built, an adaptation for winter survival. It is dark brown in color, with a broad yellowish band from shoulder to over hips, meeting at the base of the tail with light patches in front of the ears. Wolverine males are larger than females. Body length is between 31 and 44 inches, weight between 18 and 42 pounds.

Behavior:

Wolverines are primarily nocturnal but can be active at any time during the day. In addition, they are non-migratory and do not hibernate. Males traverse a large home range size of more than 1,000 square miles which they share with 2 or 3 females. Very powerful for its size, wolverines are capable of scaring a bear or even a mountain lion from a fresh kill.

Feeding:

The skull of the wolverine is robust and its powerful teeth and musculature enable it to forage on frozen meat and bone. Wolverines will eat anything that they can find, including moose, elk, porcupines, birds, beavers, deer, and squirrels, as well as eggs, roots, and berries.

Where to see it in the Klamath Parks:

Because wolverines are rare in California and Oregon, you should consider yourself very lucky to spot an animal, or even see its tracks. This species is suspected to occur in the forested highland environments in and around Crater Lake National Park and possibly Lassen Volcanic National Park.



Hey you! Want a piece of me!?

Habitat:

Wolverines inhabit forests (primarily coniferous) and tundra.

Distribution:

Wolverines can be found from Northern Canada and Alaska to northwest Washington, with a spotty distribution in the western U.S., but increasing in California, Colorado, Montana, Oregon, and Washington.

Status:

Gulo gulo is not listed as federally endangered, but is a federal species of concern. In California and Oregon wolverines are listed as threatened species.

Additional Information:

For more information on wolverine life history, research, management, and to view wolverine photographs and art, visit The Wolverine Foundation at:

<http://www.wolverinefoundation.org/>